

November 13, 2019

Mike Fong
Senior Deputy Mayor
Seattle City Hall
600 4th Avenue, 7th Floor
Seattle, WA 98104

Re: your letter to Council Budget Chair Sally Bagshaw of 10/31/19 regarding LEAD

Dear Deputy Mayor Fong,

Thank you for forwarding the letter you sent to City Council Budget Chair Sally Bagshaw about LEAD on October 29. I wanted to take this opportunity to clarify a few points. We also hope that the Mayor, as a LEAD governing partner, will assist in (i) ensuring the planned LEAD database is able to optimally connect with SPD, Seattle City Attorney and Seattle Municipal Court data systems so that partners can have dashboard data on how the program is operating in real time, and to support operational coordination, (ii) pursuing our robust continuing evaluation agenda for LEAD, and (iii) injecting urgency in securing a channel to permanent housing and effective treatment modalities for stimulant users. We would greatly value the Mayor's assistance on all counts, and look forward to working together on all these points in the coming year.

Clarifications

LEAD is not a single tool but rather a case conferencing framework for coordinating all the available tools to best effect. Your letter comments that "there is never one right tool for everyone." It's important to bear in mind that, despite its name, LEAD is not one tool – diversion – but rather, a framework for smart, well-informed coordination of *all the available tools*, with police, prosecutors and case managers able to share much more information than would be the case otherwise, and make the best choice of all the tools at each of their disposal about how to address continued issues participants may be having. Diversion – where jail booking and prosecution are avoided where they likely would be counterproductive – is just one route into the program. LEAD case management and coordination are also available for crime prevention upstream for people referred by officers or neighborhood/community leaders on a social contact basis. One of the breakthrough innovations of LEAD is to coordinate what happens when a participant faces either old or additional legal issues, so the resolution of those other proceedings doesn't inadvertently compromise a participant's progress or stabilization plan. LEAD is not immunity from arrest or prosecution, and LEAD participants do face booking and new criminal charges, but when individuals are in LEAD, the left hand is much more likely to know what the right hand is doing, and systems can be coordinated to improve efficacy.

Data collection and production require intentional and coordinated effort from all partners, and we would appreciate the Mayor's assistance in achieving this. The Mayor's Office recently asked for LEAD data in response to a wide range of questions, on a very short timeframe, outside the scope of our standard reporting obligations to City. REACH, City Attorney and PDA staff immediately went to work and hand-pulled any information available to be responsive to your inquiries, and advised which queries are not answerable given City and County data systems, analyst capacity and legal privacy barriers. We have long flagged the need for a database set up to respond to anticipated inquiries from governing and operational partners. When this was not pursued by the Mayor's Office, other LEAD partners secured a Microsoft grant to finance the design and building of a database, and Councilmember Bagshaw provided for Seattle IT capacity to project manage this effort so it can be as effective as possible in connecting with SPD, Seattle City Attorney, Seattle Municipal Court, and King County data systems. Leadership is needed to ensure this database can be effectively used by SPD officers and can pull from City Attorney and Municipal Court data systems. The LEAD project management team would greatly appreciate help and strong direction from the Mayor's Office at this juncture, to ensure we can make best use of this chance to mobilize data to report on and improve LEAD operations. There are some key upcoming decision points. Our lead on this is Tim Candela, tim.candela@defender.org, who is working closely with Tim Taylor at Seattle IT, the assigned business analyst working on the LEAD database project.

LEAD can provide and has provided data on frequency of substantive meetings with participants. You wrote to Councilmember Bagshaw that LEAD "does not currently work on a model that evaluates the number of case management contacts ...". While you did not ask the LEAD project management team that question, in our October 18, 2019 response to the Mayor's Office inquiries, we noted that thus far in 2019, LEAD case managers facilitated 19,861 substantive client meetings to address pertinent outcomes such as housing, employment, treatment, medical care, legal requirements, etc., an average of more than 35 meetings per engaged client in the first three quarters of the year, or 47 meetings annualized per engaged client.

This is one of the proposed performance metrics we suggest for the LEAD contract going forward.

Number of LEAD referrals who have not yet completed intake is directly related to excessive caseloads which 2020 funding will rectify. You noted that 44% of people with approved referrals since July 2018 haven't completed their intake, but omitted our related comment that "the fact that this group has not yet completed intake may be more attributable to lack of outreach capacity, than the unwillingness of the referred individual, who often does not even know they have been approved, or what LEAD is. Capacity challenges are severely limiting the number of new referrals whom LEAD outreach staff can reach and engage (they also work with current post-intake LEAD clients)."

Evaluation workplan

LEAD governing partners have established a robust plan for ongoing program evaluation, and we welcome the Mayor's Office to join in evaluation planning. The LEAD Policy Coordinating Group has established an Evaluation Workgroup which meets most months and has established a robust evaluation workplan, as follows:

- The **Evans School at the UW** is doing a **community-level impact study** in Burien, where we have the resources to induct pretty much everyone who should be in LEAD and show the difference in actual and felt conditions the community as a result of implementation at scale. The project by June 2020 is to develop a research design and then to conduct a baseline study, determining community conditions and perceptions at the point of LEAD launch, setting up the project for a post-implementation reiteration of the same methodology a couple of years down the road, either by the same researchers or others using the same methodology. The goal is to understand what the felt community-level impact is in a jurisdiction implementing LEAD at scale, a situation we have not yet had the opportunity to test in Seattle.
- The **Center for Court Innovation** is working with LEAD/Seattle and four other sites to devise a **multi-site evaluation of police diversion of sex workers**.
- The **Urban Institute** agreed to evaluate LEAD's impact on drug use (we are seeking funding).
- We will be working with the **Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP)** and other state research teams to devise a plan for **multi-site evaluation of LEAD programs in Washington**, which can include Seattle, pursuant to new legislative funding for police diversion in HB 1767.
- **King County** continuously **evaluates MIDD-funded programs for intended impact**, and is also doing heightened investment monitoring of LEAD and certain other larger strategies.
- We're **seeking funding** to study LEAD's **impact on failure to appear and cost/system utilization in Seattle Municipal Court** since we added a LEAD liaison attorney in the City Attorney's Office in spring 2017, paralleling the function the King County Prosecutor has had since program inception that appears to have been responsible for the large reduction in felony filings and King County-responsible jail days, a change not seen for SMC cases in the initial evaluation.
- The **LEAD Evaluation Workgroup**, delegated by the Policy Coordinating Group, is conducting analysis with SPD on how LEAD induction affects **racial disparity** in drug and prostitution enforcement. Preliminary analysis suggests that LEAD services skew toward people of color, compared to arrest and system-as-usual processing.
- The **LEAD Evaluation Workgroup** is also exploring how to accurately state the gap between the resources now available to LEAD participants (case management, some discretionary funds available to case managers, some enhanced clinical support and transitional housing available to Trueblood participants with higher acuity mental illness), and **the resources needed to more rapidly and sustainably stabilize and thrive**,

such as greater access to permanent housing, improved stimulant use disorder therapies, and eviction prevention supports.

We understand the Mayor's Office will contract with an outside analyst to assess LEAD's program structure, goals and use of data, in light of best practices for diversion and case management, and are looking forward to working with your consultant over the next several months. Meanwhile, we hope to see your colleagues this Friday, November 15, at the next scheduled meeting of the Evaluation Workgroup.

Adjacent policy leadership needed to improve outcomes, and request to partner.

Your letter to Councilmember Bagshaw rightly notes that, for LEAD participants who are homeless or have insecure housing, securing permanent housing is a key priority. LEAD works under a Housing First framework, recognizing that recovery from trauma, Substance Use Disorder and other behavioral health challenges is made much harder when living homeless or with insecure housing. Similarly, your letter expresses interest in ensuring that connections to behavioral health services through LEAD case management – which the King County Behavioral Health and Recovery Division (BHRD) is already able to account for – are productive. This is certainly a real concern for LEAD case managers and the LEAD project management team, particularly given the current lack of effective stimulant treatment modalities, and the increasing prevalence of stimulant use, including for LEAD participants.

There is no question that we presently lack an adequate channel to housing for the LEAD population; this group traditionally has been de-prioritized in the Coordinated Entry for All process for allocation of homeless housing. Thus, housing outcomes are artificially depressed by sheer lack of housing options for this population. However, given that structural barrier, REACH case managers have achieved remarkable outcomes in obtaining permanent housing for their clients. The 2018 MIDD evaluation conducted by King County found that Drug Court graduation increased by 120% with the introduction of housing vouchers for Drug Court participants. It's highly likely that LEAD clients would similarly see improved outcomes with the addition of housing options dedicated to this population, and we would welcome your partnership in seeking such dedicated housing resources.

There is also no question about the prevalence of stimulant use and the inefficacy of most conventional treatment modalities for stimulants. The LEAD project management team would welcome an active partnership with the Mayor's office in elevating these policy priorities in 2020 so that LEAD case management can yield better outcomes for participants. Jesse Rawlins, jesse.rawlins@defender.org, is our lead on this policy work.

We look forward to working with the Mayor in 2020 to get the greatest impact out of LEAD, its unique assets and partnerships. Together, hopefully we can make significant steps in building out a system of care in which a better alternative to jail and prosecution would be available for people with behavioral health conditions in all appropriate cases.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa'.

Lisa Dugaard
for the LEAD project management team

cc:

City Council Budget Chair Sally Bagshaw
Seattle Police Chief Carmen Best
Seattle City Attorney Pete Holmes
Senior Advisor to the Mayor Tess Colby
Senior Advisor to the Mayor Julie Kline
King County Department of Community & Human Services Director Leo Flor
King County Prosecutor Dan Satterberg
King County Sheriff Mitzi Johnanknecht
Seattle City Councilmembers